

Proposed Bill 5382

Dennis Cleary, Wolcott Resident and Former State Representative

Eugene A. Migliaro, Jr. was born on November 19, 1925, in Waterbury, Connecticut. In 1942, on his 17th birthday, he joined the United States Marine Corps and served until 1945 when he was honorably discharged with the rank of Corporal.

Upon his return home from the Marine Corps, he founded a number of successful businesses, including a hardware store, an automobile service station and a real estate and insurance agency. He was also involved in his community and was a founding member of the popular Waterbury Young Marines, a youth civic organization.

He, his wife Helen, and their three children moved to Wolcott, Connecticut in 1958. He volunteered as a police supernumerary in Wolcott and also served as a member of the Wolcott Town Council and the Wolcott Police Commission. In the early 1960's, while a little league coach, he was instrumental in building Wolcott's little league field.

He served as a State Representative from 1973 to 1975 and from 1977 to 1991, representing the 80th House District, which included the towns of Wolcott and Southington. As a State Representative, Gene sat on the Appropriations Committee for eighteen years and on the Public Safety Committee for fourteen years, two years as chairperson and twelve years as its ranking member. He was known as an outspoken and fiery politician who was devoted to veterans' issues throughout his career and was responsible for the passage of a dozen bills affecting veterans. He was also instrumental in procuring funding for many public improvements in Wolcott including the complete redesign and reconstruction of Route 322 and East Street.

In 1993, Gene was elected Mayor of Wolcott and served until 1995 when Governor John G. Rowland appointed him to serve as the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans' Affairs. He held that position for 8 years until 2003, during which time he worked tirelessly to promote the welfare of veterans and earned a reputation for his open door policy, allowing any veteran to walk into his office to talk to him without an appointment.

Throughout his career, Gene earned numerous awards in recognition of his leadership and work on behalf of veterans from such groups as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans and the Iwo Jima Survivors of Connecticut. He also received many other citations and awards for his service to the community from such elected bodies and organizations as the United States House of Representatives, the Office of the Governor of Connecticut, the Connecticut House of Representatives, the Connecticut State Police Forensic Laboratory, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, and the Boy and Girl Scouts of America.

He was the proud recipient of two Associate degrees, one in general education and one in science, and in November 1992, was awarded a Bachelor of Science degree.

Gene died on February 20, 2007, at the age of 81.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Dennis Cleary
112 Mad River Road
Wolcott, CT